

## CLAIMS

1. A tape measure having a case, in which is a spooled  
concave measuring blade, the blade being extendable from the  
5 case via an opening, the tape measure having a spring which  
acts to urge the blade back into its spooled configuration,  
and an end piece at the free end of the measuring blade,  
wherein the tape measure further comprises at least one  
aperture in the casing to allow direct access to the spooled  
10 blade.

2. A tape measure according to claim 1, wherein there are  
at least two apertures in the casing.

15 3. A tape measure according to either claim 1 or claim 2,  
wherein the at least one aperture is provided in the edge of  
the case.

4. A tape measure according to claim 3, wherein the length  
20 of the at least one aperture, the length being measured  
around the circumference of the spooled blade, is at least 3  
cm.

5. A tape measure according to claim 3, wherein the length  
25 of the at least one aperture is at least 5 cm.

6. A tape measure according to either claim 4 or claim 5,  
wherein the portions of the casing which have apertures in  
follow the circumference of the spool on which the measuring  
5 end is spooled.

7. A tape measure according to any one of claims 4 to 6,  
wherein the width of the at least one aperture is less than  
the width of the spooled measuring blade.

10

8. A tape measure according to any one of claims 1 to 7,  
further comprising means for driving at least one of the  
discs or the spool on which the measuring blade is spooled  
in a direction to extend the blade from the casing.

15

9. A tape measure according to claim 8, wherein the  
driving means are an extension of one of the discs such that  
it extends through an aperture in the case.

20 10. A tape measure according to claim 8, wherein the  
driving means comprise a thumbwheel mounted in the case,  
which thumbwheel can drive one of the discs or the spool on  
which the blade is spooled.

11. A tape measure according to claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel is located such that it is always linked to the disc or the spool.

5 12. A tape measure according to claim 10, wherein the thumbwheel is movable between two positions, in one of which it is linked to the disc or the spool, and in the other of which it is not linked to the disc or the spool.

10 13. A tape measure according to claim 12, wherein the thumbwheel is biased to the non-linked position.

14. A tape measure according to any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the thumbwheel directly engages the disc or the  
15 spool.

15. A tape measure according to any one of claims 10 to 13, wherein the thumbwheel engages the disc or the spool by way of one or more intermediate gear cogs.